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**Student Organization Success: Developing a Business Plan for the University of Arkansas
American Marketing Association Collegiate Chapter**

By

Candace Gooding

Advisor: John Cole

**An honors thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Marketing and Supply Chain
Management**

**Sam M. Walton College of Business
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas**

May 2015

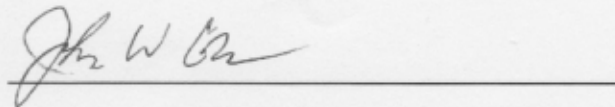
Abstract

This paper explores best practices and original research to develop suggestions for the University of Arkansas American Marketing Association Collegiate Chapter in order to face an upcoming change in officer structure. Previously relying on a class structure for officers, University of Arkansas AMA is transitioning to leadership completely outside the classroom. College students involved in various organizations across the country were surveyed in order to find commonalities between organizations and perceptions of organizations. Similarities, combined with previous literature, were used as a basis for developing recommendations.

Keywords: Student organizations, leadership, AMA

This honors thesis is approved for recommendation.

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**Student Organization Success: Developing a Business Plan for the University of Arkansas
American Marketing Association Collegiate Chapter**

Due to upcoming changes in class offerings, the operations and organizational structure of the American Marketing Association University of Arkansas Collegiate Chapter (Arkansas AMA) must evolve to meet future demands. For the past several years, Arkansas AMA has relied on a special topics class that served as the executive board to manage daily operations of the organization. Without this structure of guaranteed dedication and meeting times, the ability to maintain the success of the chapter is jeopardized. Before the special topics class was introduced, Arkansas AMA was never as successful, no matter how ambitious the leaders. With the current class dissolving, a plan must be created to avoid that same fate.

Arkansas AMA has developed a reputation for its continued success and has increased visibility from faculty members, such as the dean, as a result of repeatedly performing well at the international conference. A combination of organizational theory and best practices within and outside of AMA should be considered to ensure similar accolades can be achieved in the future. With this study, information was gathered that can be utilized to ensure the success of Arkansas AMA in the future.

American Marketing Association Mission Statement

The American Marketing Association (AMA) is an international professional society of individual members with an interest in the practice, study and teaching of marketing. Our primary objectives are to urge and assist the professional and personal development of our members and create a social environment that is conducive to establishing lifelong networking opportunities (American Marketing Association, 2011).

University of Arkansas AMA Collegiate Chapter Mission Statement

The American Marketing Association Collegiate Chapter at the University of Arkansas (Arkansas AMA) is a student-run organization dedicated to providing students with the tools, real-world experience, and networking opportunities that will aid them in their careers through involvement with both the University of Arkansas and the community.

History and Current State of Arkansas AMA

Arkansas AMA first started in the fall of 1983 when the marketing faculty at the Walton College of Business agreed to transform the marketing club into a more professional organization by affiliating with AMA (Dub Ashton, personal communication, April 12, 2015). Student officers, with the help of the faculty advisor, ran the chapter. Prior to Arkansas AMA, there was only one business organization on campus with a professional focus, Beta Alpha Psi, which was geared toward accounting students. Normal AMA activities during this time included monthly meetings and guest speakers. Arkansas AMA made great strides as a chapter and as an on campus organization including receiving their first national recognition in 1984 at the International Collegiate Conference (Dub Ashton, personal communication, April 12, 2015). This continued until the national charter was lost for not complying with AMA Collegiate rules and a general loss of direction and commitment from leadership (John Cole, personal communication, April 14, 2015).

Arkansas AMA began the process of reinstating with the organization at a national level in 2008, and by 2009 was a recognized chapter again. After some less than successful semesters trying to put an officer team in place, a special topics course was created to serve as the officer team in the fall of 2010. This way, student officers could get credit for the real world experience they were gaining, and there would be a higher level of accountability. On February 18, 2015, a

policy was adopted to be recommended to faculty to limit the length and purpose of a special topics course (Molly Jensen, personal communication, April 13, 2015). Below is the special topics course policy proposal that will be voted on in May of 2015:

Special Topics courses are designed to allow for flexibility in topical course offerings on a limited and trial basis. If a given undergraduate Special Topics course is to be offered regularly, it should receive the approval of the full faculty. Effective at the beginning of the Spring 2016 semester, a given undergraduate Special Topics course must receive Walton College faculty approval as a new course with a regular name and course number prior to being taught the fourth time. In unusual circumstances, the Undergraduate Programs and Assessment Committee may grant the host department an exemption where the Special Topics course may be taught one additional time before faculty approval as a new regular course (Timothy Yeager, personal communication, April 13, 2015).

With this proposal highly likely to pass, the Arkansas AMA special topics course will no longer exist since it did not pass approval as a regular course and has been in place longer than four semesters. Out of over 350 active collegiate chapters, there is only one or two other chapters suspected to have a similar setup to how Arkansas AMA has been run in the past few years. That being said, the most successful chapters have never had a class setup, so it is clear that it is not necessarily needed for success. This research hopes to illustrate how Arkansas AMA can maintain and exceed its current levels of success in years to come without the crutch of a special topics course.

Literature Review

Student organizations have not been a very common topic of research. What research does exist is primarily in the field of sociology or focused on why student organizations should

exist, but even this is limited. To suit our purposes, we focused our literature review on the benefits of student organizations, the elements of motivation that can affect the achievement of goals, the process of creating and maintaining commitment from members and officers, building trust, and finally, the fringe social benefits associated with membership. Though many sources are not specifically focused on student organizations, organizations and topics with the closest fit and most similarities were selected to supplement research.

Benefits of Student Organizations

It is commonly preached by university career centers across the nation that employers want candidates that are involved and have effective skills outside of academics. There is a higher demand and a higher expectation for entry-level employees to have experience and the ability to plan strategically and think critically (Pohl & Butler, 1994). While an increased emphasis on group projects allow for some in class experience and skill development, it is not as much as employers are looking for.

Class experiences also do not allow for much differentiation for ambitious students looking to advance themselves since all students participate. Many professors also guide students through projects, so less leadership skills are developed. Opportunities for advancement within careers have been found higher for “those who have developed, practiced and refined leadership skills as part of their educational preparation” (Gordon, 1995). Though there has been progress to incorporate more leadership learning into the classroom, there is a limit to how much of this experience can be gained while maintaining the curriculum of the course.

Due to this large gap in educational benefits and employment expectations, it may appear that students are left to fend for themselves to prepare for the job search. A common solution to this gap has emerged on campuses across the nation – student organizations. Students are now

able to gain these leadership skills and experiences by joining on campus organizations (Gordon, 1995). Student organizations bridge the gap from classroom to boardroom by applying what is taught in the classroom to a professional setting (Pohl & Butler, 1994).

There are many types of student organizations, ranging from strictly social to pre-professional, and all can have very impactful benefits to members and leaders. Particularly in pre-professional student organizations such as AMA, activities and events are planned for students, by students, while constantly focusing on the professional development of members (American Marketing Association, 2011). Skills in event planning, creation and execution can be developed and serve as great hands-on leadership experiences that go beyond what can be taught in a classroom.

Pre-professional student organizations are also particularly beneficial at displaying how businesses work. A study primarily focused on the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) found that through membership in these student organizations, “students learn how to effectively operate in a structured organizational setting before entering the workforce,” (Pohl & Butler, 1994). Not only does this setup create order, it prepares them for the real world.

Members are happiest in an organization when it is structured like a business (Wallace, 1995). Though there are some flaws of bureaucracy, humans like routine and crave structure, so a business structure works well (Wallace, 1995). The same can apply to student organizations that are structured like a business. Particularly in the business school, there are many organizations that build their structure based on corporate structure.

Benefits of student organizations are not limited to hands on experience in leadership and business structure. Student organizations allow members the opportunity to connect with faculty outside of the classroom setting, which can improve student performance and prepare students

for life after school, which leads to a better reputation for the university (Fisher & Lloyd, 2010). These organizations not only provide benefits to the university by connecting students and faculty, they bring together faculty, students and industry professionals. (Fisher & Lloyd, 2010) This connection between all three parties allows everyone to learn and gain experiences that would not be possible without collaboration.

While there is a perception by some students that they do not have time to participate in student organizations, the majority do not believe this. Within the study of senior education majors at Marshall University, 27.7% claimed they did not time for student organizations (Gordon, 1995). While a lack of time is true for some and others lack the desire to make time, in both cases these are not the types of members desired for membership or for leadership positions within student organizations.

Motivation

With the many benefits available from membership in student organizations, it is easy to see how students are recruited to join these organizations. Keeping new members motivated, however, leads to some serious challenges, and without motivated officers the organization will fail (American Marketing Association, 2013). There is very little research of how to keep members of organizations and clubs motivated, and even less focusing on student organizations. Employee motivation for businesses may provide a similar model, but this model fails to extend fully as in a business, employees have salaries and depend on their job to survive. If an employee is doing poorly, there can be negative performance evaluations to attempt to remedy behavior, which can eventually lead to termination.

While a student officer can be removed from their position, their economic situation is no way changed by it. Because of this, research was focused on the motivation of volunteers.

Volunteer motivation provides a better model as they are unpaid, usually part-time, and have very little forcing them to continue involvement. It is easy to see why people are motivated to work as working earns money, which is economically beneficial to them. Humans, when left alone, work in their own self-interest, so giving time up for free seems like a contradiction (Shye, 2010). Because of this, many different motivations are considered when identifying what causes people to continue these actions (Harrison, 1995, Yeung, 2004, Shye, 2010).

Some of the motivations that are often found in volunteers can be easily excluded for a student organization such as AMA. Religion, for example, is a very common source of motivation for volunteers (Harrison, 1995, Yeung, 2004, Shye, 2010). While this would apply for religious based student organizations or possibly philanthropic student organizations dedicated to bettering the community, religion is a less applicable motive for joining pre-professional student organizations that are more career-oriented. Another factor that has proved to be common among individuals motivated to volunteer is a high level of education. (Shye, 2010). The more educated a person is, the more motivated they will be to volunteer and to continue volunteering (Shye, 2010). Though an interesting finding, it does not prove helpful in determining what makes a student motivated to volunteer as on college campuses, members and potential members are all at very similar levels of education unless they have returned to school for an additional degree. There may be some differences between the motivation of a freshman and a senior, but it is not as extreme as the difference between the motivation of a G.E.D. recipient compared to a Ph.D. (Shye, 2010).

Personal beliefs and the beliefs of others are very influential motivators that can be applied to student organizations. Subjective norm, which is what a person thinks others want them to do, is very important for keeping volunteers motivated (Harrison, 1995) All humans may

be at least somewhat concerned what others think, but this is particularly true for young adults, which most college students are. Values also play an important part in whether a person will volunteer their time. Value systems, unlike the subjective norm, are an internalized pressure to maintain consistency. (Harrison, 1995) If the member feels like volunteering their time is the right thing to do, then they will do it.

Proper training is also crucial when maintaining any motivation. In a study of volunteers by David Harrison, as experience increased the opportunity cost of other activities had less of an influence on attendance (Harrison, 1995). With experience, people feel more comfortable, feel more in control, and know what they are doing and what is expected of them (Harrison, 1995). With this added security, there is less of an action paralysis and people are more likely to take action, whether that is through event attendance or completing their designated responsibilities. Once members or officers are acclimated, they will be more motivated to complete their work.

Training is also crucial to mitigate any negative effects of change. Being a student organization, officers and other leaders change often because the average student is only in college for four years. Even if the same students are in leadership positions multiple years in a row, they are often changing titles every year. Despite this instability, many organizations benefit of keeping officers for multiple years (American Marketing Association, 2013). In both scenarios, change is inevitable. Through training and transparency, the fear and uncertainty members have towards change can be reduced which will lead to less change resistance (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005). Training empowers the new officers, which makes them “*able to do* what needs to be done in the change process,” which is crucial in change leadership (Gill, 2002). If there is less resistance to change and incoming officers feel more prepared for their roles, activity momentum can be maintained through the year.

Commitment

Structure of the organization will not necessarily dictate the commitment, but if you better the members of your organization, they will remain more loyal (Wallace, 1995). Particularly for pre-professional student organizations, the goal is to develop the members, so commitment should come relatively naturally. Within business, if career advancement can be seen, organizational members will remain more committed (Wallace, 1995). Though being involved in a student organization is not a career, similar increases in commitment would be expected if members can see the opportunity to advance within the organization.

In addition to seeing the opportunity for growth, the perception of power is very important in maintaining commitment (Ranson, Hinings & Greenwood, 1980). Within organizations, power can be seen as “the capacity to determine outcomes within and for an organization” and is often based on access to materials and resources (Ranson, Hinings & Greenwood, 1980). Usually it is only the top people within an organization that make final decisions for the organization, but involvement in this process can be a strong factor in creating commitment. The more participation a member has, particularly in decision making, the more they will be committed to the organization, because the member is more integrated in the group. (Wallace, 1995) Participation in decision making not only increases involvement, it builds a foundation of trust and respect. When members are being heard, they will trust that the organization cares about them as an individual. Many factors hold individuals to the organization, but nothing holds members to each other like trust (Gill, 2002).

Trust

For years trust has been seen as something needed not only in organizations, but also in human conduct (Hosmer, 1995). People try to build their organizational structure to create trust,

but that may not be possible. Trust helps to supplement the success of the organizational structure, but it cannot replace the structure (Hosmer, 1995).

Two large effects on commitment are how legitimate reward criteria are and how much autonomy is allowed in the member's work (Wallace, 1995). Any rewards or promotions need to be carefully proven and consistent to ensure fair treatment and agreement across all members. By creating a structure to prove the rewards criteria are legitimate, trust is built.

Autonomy given to leaders lets them develop their skills and avoid the feeling of micromanagement because they truly own the task. Ownership can prevent students from taking a passive attitude towards their education because humans naturally invest themselves more in things they have a say in (Veronesi & Gunderman, 2012). If the goal of these pre-professional student organizations is to combine in-class education with outside experience, giving members ownership of their experiences and involvement will have them not only more engaged in the organization but engaged in their education as well.

Social Benefits

Though there are many professional and academic benefits of membership in student organizations, many members also reap many social benefits of membership. While they may be building their skills, they are also making friends (Gordon, 1995). Though this may seem like a side benefit that does not warrant mentioning, relationships between members can increase the involvement of members and officers and increase participation rates. A survey of volunteer motivations showed that the two most important motivators were enabling the volunteer to develop friendships and strengthening the volunteers' feeling of belonging to the community (Shye, 2010). Though these would easily be seen as contributing factors, both volunteers and non-volunteers agreed these would be the top motivators (Shye, 2010).

Arkansas AMA officers have jokingly called themselves “frAMAlly,” because they see each other as friends, family and AMA. While this may have started as a joking term, it is obvious there are relationships built between the officers and a very high level of trust, which prove a higher level of commitment. Truly good leaders have a high level of emotional intelligence; “emotionally intelligent leaders ‘win people’s hearts’,” (Gill, 2002). If emotional intelligence is built through interactions between officers, it can be carried to understanding general member needs and strengthening the entire organization.

Methodology

Due to the lack of literature in this area, a survey was created to identify commonalities between organizations that members and officers perceive as successful. This study can find, based on member perception, which organizations have successfully avoided two common student organization pitfalls: failing to develop their members, and failing to maintain momentum throughout the year. By understand the planning and commitment that contributes to these organizations’ successes, similar organizational structure can be modified for Arkansas AMA.

The survey utilized a convenience sample primarily composed of students at multiple universities. Surveys were distributed online through Qualtrics to students at the University of Arkansas as well as all schools with an active American Marketing Association collegiate chapter. No compensation was offered to survey respondents for their time.

Sample Size

While all people online over the age of eighteen currently involved in some sort of organization were surveyed for the research, the primary focus was on respondents currently in college. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there are approximately 21

million students attending college (US Department of Education, 2014). No reliable data exists, however, on what percentage of those students are involved in student organizations so a population could not be calculated. Using a 7% margin of error and a 90% confidence level, a sample size of 139 would be required. Since sample size does not change significantly for populations over 20,000, as long as at least .1% of all college students are currently involved in some sort of student organization, this sample size should be accurate.

Research Questions

Within the commonalities of successful organizations, there are several key factors to address and questions to be answered. The first of which is analyzing what organizations respondents are heavily involved in to identify organizations that should receive further scrutiny and qualitative research. Time commitment also needed investigation so realistic recommendations for time commitment could be made for future AMA officers. Information on event and activity planning is wanted to identify if there are any similarities across organizations. This also aims to look to find common expectations people have from not only joining organizations, but also from taking on leadership positions within them, and how satisfied they are afterward.

Research Hypothesis

Through there has been extensive research on successful work organizations, very little research has been completed on the organization or success of student organizations. Even though they have some similarities, student organizations have many unique characteristics from businesses that make their structure distinctive. Using some of the findings and prior experience with student organizations, several research hypotheses were formulated.

H1: *Why Join?*: Members join organizations for experience, shared interests and the added social benefits, and will have more than one factor that pushed them to become involved.

H2: *Why Lead?*: Self reported leaders will be upperclassmen and had more serious reasons for joining the organization, such as building a resume or gaining valuable experience.

H3: *Time Commitment Differences*: Self reported leaders would have been in the organization longer and spend more hours participating in club activities per week.

Although there will be some differences for each of the organizations that participate per type of organization, it is not expected that they will outweigh the commonalities. Significant differences are expected between the types of organizations, however.

Question Formulation

Questions were developed to gauge the correlation of time commitment and planning styles to the perceived success of the organization, and focused on the five key areas: high involvement organizations, organizational time commitment, event and activity planning, expectations of membership and comparison to other organizations. A complete copy of the consent form and survey questions that were distributed is displayed in Appendix A.

To identify what organizations people are heavily involved in, respondents were asked how many organizations they were involved in, and then to list which ones they consider themselves “an active, participating member”. After high involvement organizations were identified, the questions all focused on the organization the respondent identified as the one they spent the most time with. This was done with the assumption that respondents spend the most time with the organization they deem as most successful. These organizations were sorted into

general categories to identify what type of organization they were, so any skewing factors for event planning could be accounted for.

To gauge time commitment, respondents were given five options for how much time they spent with the organization per week, ranging from under 5 hours to 21+ hours. The next group of time questions were formatted as slide bars where respondents could identify what percentage of their time fit into which categories. These questions were used to identify what percentage of time is spent outside of organizational activities, and for officers what percentage of time is spent on officer duties compared to membership activities. Solid numerical amounts were not collected for the subcategories to make answering easier for the respondent and to allow comparison across people with different overall levels of time commitment. A series of Likert-scale questions were asked afterward for respondents to compare their involvement to people within the organization, and people in other organizations.

Respondents were given free response areas to describe how events and activities were planned for this organization and what elements make this organization successful. It is assumed that self-identified officers will give more accurate descriptions of the planning process, however, general members were asked the same question in order to ascertain their knowledge of the internal structure of the organization they are focusing on. General member knowledge will be compared to the perceived influence they have on the planning of activities. Six Likert-scale questions were used to identify the perceived success of the organization to consider when analyzing the qualitative planning data.

All driving factors of membership and officer-ship are identified through multiple-choice answers with an additional free response area. Respondents are then asked to rate on a Likert-scale how successful the organization has been at meeting their expectations. An additional free

response area is presented to pinpoint what is the most important perceived benefit members have received from organizational involvement.

Lastly, respondents were asked to rate how this organization compares to others using a Likert-scale question ranging from “much better” to “much worse”. Additional qualitative data is gathered with a follow up free response question that asks them to explain their opinion.

Implementation

After receiving IRB exemption, a confidential link provided by Qualtrics was distributed via email to students in the Walton College of Business and to the president of every active American Marketing Association Chapter. Additional distribution was completed on social media platforms. Distribution began on March 3, 2015 and ended on March 23, 2015. No follow up was sent to invited participants.

Analysis

Once all data were collected, results were uploaded into SPSS and Excel for analysis. Means were compared in SPSS through independent sample t-tests using a 95% confidence interval. In addition several ANOVAs and bi-variate correlations were run as well as regression analysis. Much of the descriptive statistics were collected in Excel using the pivot table application.

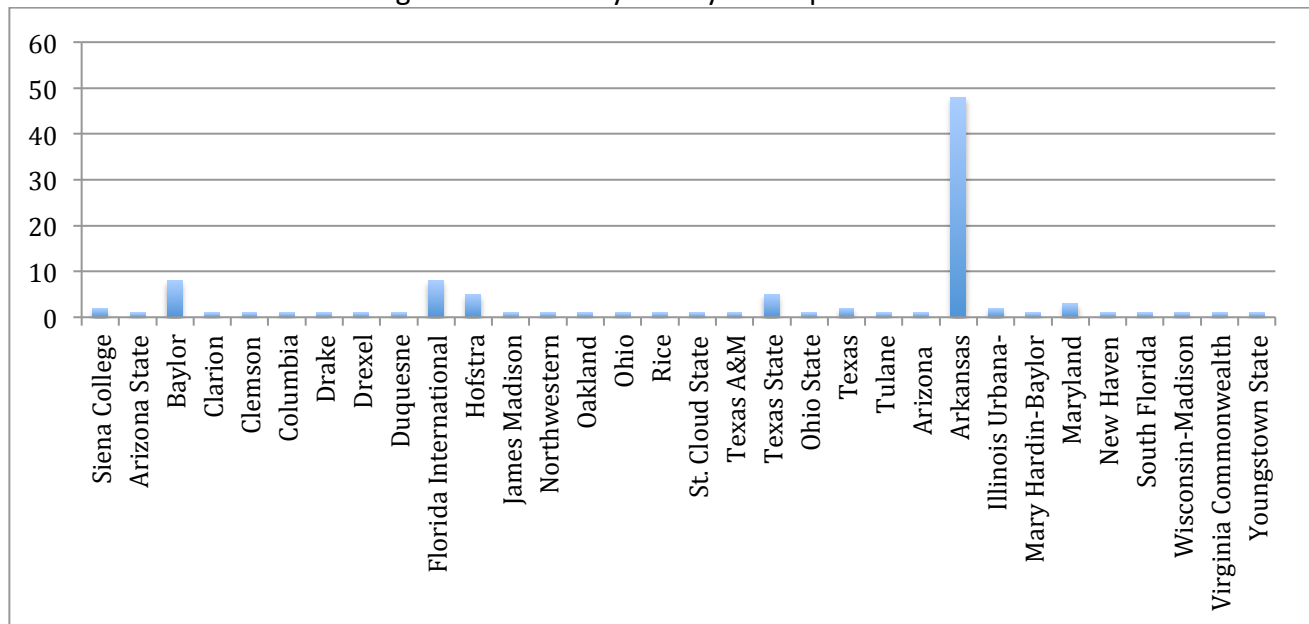
The initial goal was to first identify the organizations that were perceived as successful, and then find patterns in similarities of time commitments and planning methods. There were, however, no organizations in the data that stood out as significantly successful or significantly unsuccessful that had enough respondents to examine because the organizational pool was so diverse. Six organizations had average ratings below 3 (neutral) for their success measures, but all 6 of these only had one respondent per organization complete the survey. Similarly, of the 5

organizations that had an average rating of 4.5 or above (between somewhat successful and very successful), each only had one respondent complete the survey. Due to this, the focus was switched to finding overall trends across organizations and focus divisions on type of organization instead of the organization itself.

Respondents

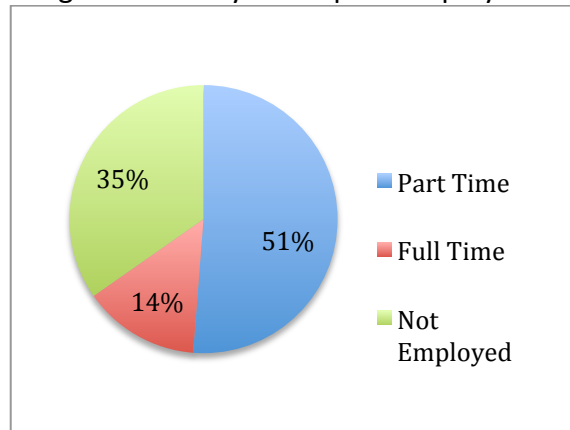
There were 244 survey respondents, and of those 236 were old enough to participate in the survey. Only 199 survey respondents, however, were currently involved in an organization, and fully completed the survey. Because this survey was targeted at university students, it was no surprise that 88.35% of the valid respondents were currently a full or part time student. Out of the 33 universities represented, most of the students were from the University of Arkansas (45.28%) followed by Baylor University (7.55%) and Florida International University (7.55%). Of the students, an overwhelming majority (85.12%) are full time students and 63.16% percent are pursuing a business major. This is more than likely caused by the fact this survey was targeted at various AMA chapters across the nation. All other categories of major were lower than 10% of the total.

Figure 1: University Survey Participation



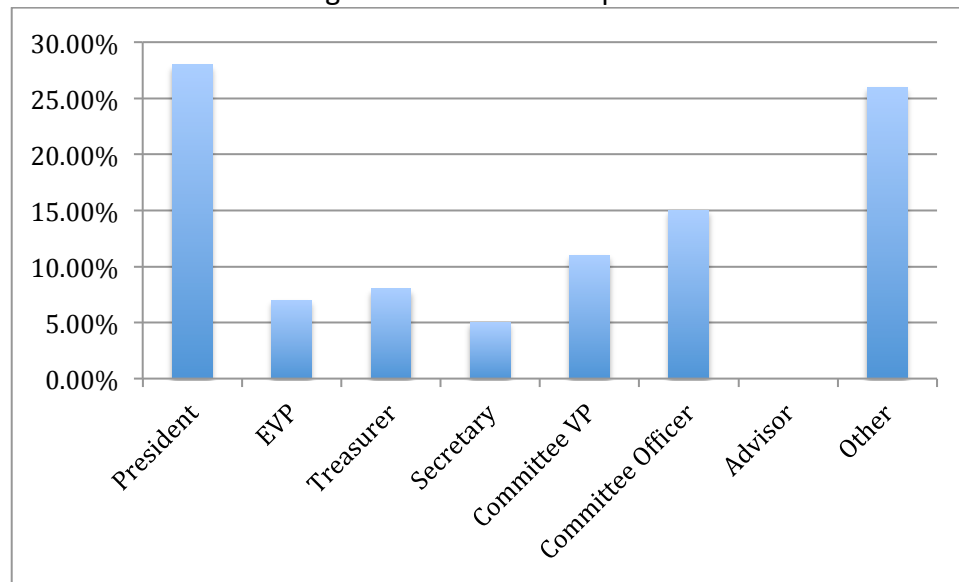
Though this survey was equally interested in males and females, 72.73% of the respondents were female. 85.95% of respondents reported a marital status of single, which again is not surprising since majority of the participants are college students, which stereotypically are not yet married. Most participants are currently working part time (51.24%) followed by not currently working (34.71%).

Figure 2: Survey Participant Employment



216 different organizations were listed as the organizations the respondents are active and involved members. 55 respondents listed AMA as their organization they were most involved in. These respondents represent 19 different AMA chapters across the country. The average respondent was involved in 1.64 organizations, but when filtering out respondents not active in an organization, the number rose to an average of 2.52 organizations. For those involved in organizations, there was a range between 1.00 – 13.00 organization, with a median and mode of 2.00. Of the respondents, 64.42% identified themselves as officers and 35.58% listed themselves as general members. Of the participants that are officers in their organization, majority of the respondents are the president of their organization (28.00%) followed by those who did not fall into the given categories of president, EVP, treasurer, secretary, committee vp, committee officer or advisor (26.00%). Other offices ranged between 5.00%-15.00% with the exception of “Advisor”, which had zero responses.

Figure 3: Officer Participation



Professional Organizations

Both the mission statement of Arkansas AMA and the mission statement of AMA as a whole emphasize the fact that the American Marketing Association is meant to be a professional organization (American Marketing Association, 2011). It was not surprising that over 90% of the respondents who said AMA was the organization they were most involved in said it was a professional organization (t-t19). AMA members were significantly further along with their degrees than non-AMA respondents (t-t17). Many AMA chapters discuss the difficulty of engaging members before junior and senior year, because before that students are often either unsure of their major or not yet worried about life after college, which creates a challenge for membership recruitment.

Figure 4: AMA listed as a Professional Organization

Group Statistics						
Are you talking about AMA?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		
What type of organization would you describe this as? Select all that apply-Professional	58	1.05	.223	.029		
No	93	1.76	.427	.044		

Independent Samples Test						
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
What type of organization would you describe this as? Select all that apply-Professional	53.018	.000	-11.716	149	.000	-.712
Equal variances assumed						
Equal variances not assumed			-13.394	145.278	.000	-.712

Why Join?

To truly understand how to recruit members, it is necessary to understand why current members joined the organization. Since AMA is a professional organization, the main focus of the analysis was on what caused people to join organizations they designated as *professional organizations*. The two largest and statistically significant draws, not surprisingly, to professional organizations were resume building and gaining valuable experience (t-t12) (t-t13). Resume building can be a tricky draw, however, because compared to all other motivators to join an organization, resume building had significantly more organizations per person than the other factors did. On average a person joining for resume building was active and involved in 3.30 organizations compared to the rest of the sample being at 2.29 organizations (t-t9). This means while these members are eager to gain information for their resume, they are going to be stretched a little thinner than a member is not worried about their resume. AMA was similar to

all professional organizations with having its too largest and statistically significant reasons for joining being resume building and gaining valuable experience (t-t20) (t-t21).

Figure 5: Officers joining for Fun

Group Statistics								
Why did you chose to be a leader in this organization? Select all that apply-Resume builder		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
How many organizations are you currently a member of?	1	54	3.2963	2.28721	.31125			
	2	28	2.2857	1.08379	.20482			

Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
How many organizations are you currently a member of?	Equal variances assumed	6.170	.015	2.208	80	.030	1.01058	.45766
	Equal variances not assumed			2.712	79.556	.008	1.01058	.37259

AMA had one additional statistically significant factor; there was a negative correlation between being in AMA and picking your organization in order to have fun (t-t22). This is in now way saying that AMA members do not have fun through their involvement, it just is not what drew them to joining AMA as compared to other organizations. So while no one should make it a point to look like AMA does not have fun, fun does not need to be stressed in sales pitches. It also cannot be assumed that this is only true of AMA members. In fact, it is also statistically significant that people that selected valuable experience as one of the reasons they joined an organization less likely to select fun as an additional reason (t-t23). This is not because people are selecting only one reason either. On average, each respondent selected 2.95 out of 5 given reasons for why they joined their organization.

Why Lead?

Officers were more likely to cite some of the more serious reasons for why they joined their organization. Many of the leaders cited wanting to gain valuable experience as a main reason they chose to be a member of their organization, and it was significantly higher than the number of general members who reported this as a factor (t-t6). Officers were also significantly more likely to cite resume building as one of the main reasons they joined their organization (t-t5). Surprising though, officers who reported wanting to build their resume as a reason they took an officer position have served significantly less time than the officers who did not see that as a reason for them taking office (t-t 8).

Figure 6: Length of Leadership for Resume Builders

Group Statistics				
Why did you chose to be a leader in this organization? Select all that apply-Resume builder	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
How long have you 1 been an officer/position holder in this organization?	54	1.4444	.76889	.10463
2	29	2.4138	4.45226	.82676

Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
How long have you been an officer/position holder in this organization?	Equal variances assumed	4.954	.029	-1.565	81	.121	-.96935	.61942
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.163	28.900	.254	-.96935	.83336

This could be caused for several reasons. For one, members who have been officers before may not see adding an extra term as something that would really boost their resume, and instead do it for fun. This also could be because officers that are not as worried about their resume are probably the type that would not be doing a last minute scramble to beef up their resumes before a job hunt. Officers were also very consistent with their reasons for joining the

organization matching their reasons for being an officer. Every single factor, resume building, gaining experience, fun, shared interest and other, all were significantly more likely to be paired with the same factor for reason a member became an officer (t-t10.1-10.5).

Overall there were no major demographic factors that decided if an organization member would be a general member or officer. Relationship status had no significant effects, but this could be due to the fact an overwhelming majority of the respondents were single (t-t 25). There was no significant difference related to student status (full time, part time, not student), which again could be caused by the overwhelming number of respondents who were full time students (t-t 28). While student status had little effect, class standing did have a significant impact on officer status. Officers were older on average compared to general members (t-t7). Employment status was very similar to other demographics in having no significant effect on whether members were officers, which is surprising because you would think the more time someone was spending working the less time they would have to spend on officer obligations (t-t 26). Though the mean was higher for men, there was no significant difference between males or females being officers (t-t 3).

Members of professional organizations were significantly less likely to say yes to consider taking a leadership position (t-t14). This could be because they already feel they are getting the resume boosts and valuable experience they desired by being a general member, but more than likely this can be attributed closer to progress with their college degree. When looking at the population, class standing had no effect on whether general members were interested in taking on a leadership position (t-t24) Members of professional organizations, however, are significantly further along with their college degrees (t-t16). While members of other types of organizations had a mean of 3.11 (closest to Jr average), professional organizations had a mean

of 3.71 (closest to Senior average). Seniors have many reasons they would not care to be an officer; many already have jobs or other commitments and for the ones who are interested, it is simply too late because this survey was answered halfway through their last semester. Other types of organizations may have enjoyed a higher rate of general members interested in being officers only because their members are younger.

It was questioned whether perceived influence in the organization would have an effect on a general member's consideration of being an officer. There was no significant difference between the two groups (t-t2). It is predicted that this is because influence on events was perceived pretty similarly across groups. 70% of respondents who were a general member said they were somewhat influential. While intentions of being an officer and a general members' perceived level of influence on the planning of activities and events were not significantly correlated, level of influence was significantly positively correlated with being in a professional organization. Professional organization general members saw themselves significantly more influential on the planning of events and activities (t-t11). While respondents in other organizations had a mean close to neutral at 3.28, respondents in professional organizations had a mean near somewhat influential at 4. This could also be caused by class standing, with upperclassmen possibly seeing themselves more influential because of being more confident, comfortable and having a larger network.

Time Commitment Differences

There are several commitment differences between officers and general members. One of the most obvious is officers spend significantly more time than general members per week on organizational activities and work (t-t1). Officers would be expected to spend more time because on top of general member activities, they have their officer duties and requirements as well. In

the survey officers were asked to report what percent of their time was spent on officer obligations, and of that time what percent was at home or on their own time, but no significant trends were identified.

Figure 7: Hour differences between Officers and General Members

Group Statistics					
Are you an officer or do you serve in a leadership position in this organization?		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Approximately how many hours a week do you spend with this organization?	Yes	96	2.39	1.301	.133
	No	46	1.74	.953	.141

Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Approximately how many hours a week do you spend with this organization?	Equal variances assumed	8.901	.003	3.003	140	.003	.646	.215
	Equal variances not assumed			3.343	117.027	.001	.646	.193

Officers were significantly older than general members. The mean for a general member was 3.03 (approximately Junior average) while the mean for an officer was 3.58 (between Junior and Senior). This could be caused by several reasons, but for the most case upper classmen are picked for officer positions because they have more experience balancing their schedules and have more experience in their majors so they are the better candidates. Oddly enough, general members have been involved with their organizations longer than the officers have in many cases (t-t4). Especially for Arkansas AMA, though other chapters have discussed it as well, recruiting underclassmen is very difficult, and while there is occasionally a general member that will rise

up to be an officer, in many cases the officers are hand recruited then asked to join the organization.

Planning Best Practices

Across the board respondents said their organizations were successful at planning activities. The average rating for those that answered the question was 4.12. No significant differences were seen between professional and nonprofessional organizations. AMA members, however, perceived their organizations as more successful at planning activities (t-t15). Non-AMA organizations ranked their success at an average of 4.08, right around somewhat successful, while AMA ranked their organizations at 4.17, on a scale of 5.

The free response data asking respondents what made their organizations successful and how events were planned were unfortunately very unhelpful. Many respondents gave one-word answers or very common sense phrases such as, events are “planned by officers.” Data this simple gives very little insight onto what is actually a best practice.

Inputting all responses into a word cloud generator, frequency of words can be identified by comparing the sizes of displayed words. Below in Figure 8 are the responses to what organizational elements allow this organization to succeed. It is obvious that committees are very important to the planning of events since “committee” (19 mentions) and “committees” (11 mentions) were two of the largest words. Executive boards were also commonly cited as well as meetings. The most frequent word after “Events” (32 mentions) was “members” (23 mentions) which scored higher than “officers” (21 mentions), which is very interesting and could possibly suggest a focus on member’s needs when planning activities.

Figure 8: Organizational Elements of Success



To dive further into best practices, a similar word cloud was created for responses to “What makes this organization better than others of its type?” displayed below in Figure 9. “Organization” and “Leadership” were tied for first place with 15 mentions each. Yet again, “members” was in second place having 14 different mentions. Other quantitative survey responses may have shown the success of organizations in meeting needs such as resume building or gaining valuable experience, but these qualitative responses display how important the social interactions between members are to the success of the organization and the positive perception of the organization.

on listed skills identified as being important for job acquisition and career advancement, and identify which skills and traits were obtained through organizational involvement. This would be compared to a base group of students not currently involved in any organizations to provide insights on what students gain from active membership in organizations, and what additional benefits are gained from serving in a leadership position.

Discussion

Combining both the results from the primary research and findings from the literature review, the following suggestions have been developed for Arkansas AMA.

Membership and Benefits

As research shows, there is a higher demand for skills in the entry-level job market that students may not yet have (Gordon, 1995). Since Arkansas AMA's mission is to provide "students with the tools, real-world experience and networking opportunities that will aid them in their careers," it is a perfect fit to fill that gap. In addition, by giving members the skills they need to succeed, they will remain loyal to the organization (Pohl & Butler, 1994). The same types of professional development activities that are currently provided by Arkansas AMA should be maintained, while adding some variability to keep things fresh and follow new trends in the market.

Since there is such a large emphasis on developing members, the initial recruitment push should focus on the "average member" of a professional organization seen from the survey results. For AMA, the initial target should be a junior or senior business major, looking for valuable experience and resume building but is not concerned with joining an organization for fun. Because these students are older, more than likely they will be the willing officers.

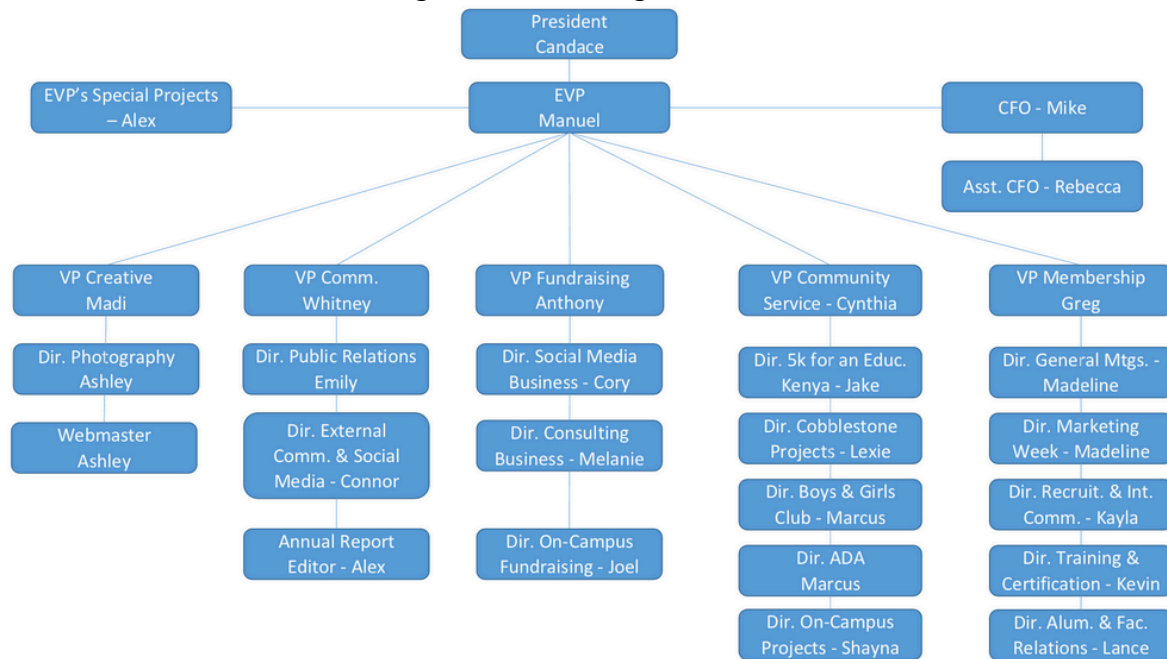
Afterward, there can be a recruitment push to inform the younger students why professional development is important to change the perception on when membership is vital.

Developing students in a professional manner will also have an additional benefit of making the University of Arkansas and the Walton College of Business look good (Fisher & Lloyd, 2010). This will help not only with gaining recognition among students, it will also help when the chapter is looking for support from the university, because if Arkansas AMA is seen as an asset, it will be treated as an asset.

Organizational Structure

People prefer organizations that are structured like a business (Wallace, 1995). Because of that, it is recommended that the newly adopted organizational chart, displayed below in Figure 10, be kept for the following year. This organizational chart, primarily developed by lead advisor Nicole Cox, added a more corporate feel to the officer organization and aided in the organization of reporting at meetings. Smaller positions that fall under director spots that are not listed can be adjusted year after year to meet the specific needs of the chapter.

Figure 10: AMA Organizational Chart



The time commitment needed will vary by position and by season. Certain officers will have “busy seasons,” such as the Director of the 5k will be busier in the spring than in the fall. At minimum, 5-10 hours should be expected per week when including all meetings and at home work. Instead of focusing on time, clear deadlines and deliverables should be set instead for each office. This way no officer is punished for doing less time if they are efficiently completing their work.

Without the class structure, Arkansas AMA should adopt the same committee meeting structure that many other successful AMA chapters have utilized. Every other week there can be a board meeting of Vice Presidents and above that is open to the entire organization where major reports are delivered. On the bi-week, general chapter meetings with speakers can be held. Committees will meet separately at a time that works best for that group. This will add consistency of regularly scheduled meetings that the class previously provided, but with the added accountability of the entire chapter watching the reports.

With this added visibility of officer actions, proper training is needed. Proper training not only prepares officers, it adds a sense of security (Harrison, 1995). The current officer binder program should be expanded, so instead of just vice presidents having a binder, every officer position should have a binder of information to pass down. If possible, majority of the upper officers should be selected the semester prior and an officer transition workshop should be held where each outgoing officer can teach the incoming officer their new role. This process should also reduce change resistance (Vakola & Nikolau, 2005). In cases where the new officer is not yet selected, binders should be comprehensive enough to completely explain all responsibilities of that officer.

Trust

No matter what structural changes are made, the membership must come first. If you empower the membership, trust will come naturally (Gill, 2002) (Hosmer, 1995). In every way possible visibility needs to be created between officers and members to increase communication and create loyalty between members. If you make them belong to the group, they will remain loyal and be more satisfied with their membership (Gordon, 1995). Every member of Arkansas AMA should truly feel like they are “frAMAlly.”

Conclusion

With upcoming changes coming to the structure of Arkansas AMA, updates must be made to the structure of the organization. With this in mind, we explored prior research while primarily focusing on the benefits of student organizations, motivation of members and officers, factors affecting commitment, trust, and the social benefits from membership. Overwhelmingly students join these types of organizations to gain experience that employers are looking for. Experience serves as a large source of motivation for students, but training is one of the key

areas of motivation that the organization can easily influence. Commitment is developed when people are able to see a benefit from involvement and when they have a say in the activities of the organization. When people have this influence, that is when trust will grow, and when people trust each other they are more likely to develop relationships.

The survey data also supported that members of these organizations are looking for professional experience, so Arkansas AMA must continue to provide these experiences to remain competitive and really engage general members. The most recent organizational structure should be maintained, because it not only added visibility but it also fosters the corporate like environment that makes members more comfortable. Set weekly meeting times would add additional structure, and making meetings open forum would give general members influence on the planning of activities increasing commitment and trust. For this to succeed, there must be proper training of officers and general members so everyone knows their responsibilities and is informed on how to make an impact to the organization. Once they are making an impact and becoming actively engaged, trust will develop until deep friendships are formed between members to continue the “frAMAlly” tradition.

Though transitioning from the officer structure of having a special topics course to having no formal support system may be daunting, it is no more challenging than other difficulties Arkansas AMA has faced in the past. With careful change management and a constant focus on the members, there is no doubt Arkansas AMA has everything it needs to be as successful, if not more successful, than it ever has been before.

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Appendix A: Survey

Dear Participant,

You are being invited to participate in a research study about organizational structures conducted at the University of Arkansas.

The purpose of this study to identify traits of successful organizations and organizational leadership structures to help identify best practices. There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study and there will be no costs associated with your participation. This survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes. Participation is completely voluntary and you may stop at any time. Your identity will not be associated with any of your responses

By completing and submitting this survey, you are agreeing to participate in this research project.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Candace Gooding at cgooding@uark.edu or John Cole at jcole@walton.uark.edu.

Thank you so much for your consideration,

Candace Gooding
Principal Researcher
cgooding@uark.edu

John Cole
Faculty Advisor
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Are you 18 years or older?

- a) Yes (continue)
- b) No (end survey)

Are you currently a member of any club or organization?

- a) Yes (continue)
- b) No (end survey)

How many organizations are you currently a member of?

_____ (any whole number response)

Of those, how many would you consider yourself an active, participating member?

_____ (any whole number response)

Please list those organizations

here: _____

Which organization previously listed do you spend the most time with?

_____ (free response 1 line)

Are you an officer or do you serve in a leadership position in this organization?

- a) Yes (continue to officer questions)
- b) No (continue to member questions)

From now on, questions will refer to the organization you listed above.

What type of organization would you describe this as? Select all that apply

- a) Professional
- b) Social
- c) Philanthropic/service
- d) Honor/Academic
- e) Athletic
- f) International/Cultural
- g) Governing
- h) Religious
- i) Special Interest
- j) Other _____

(if “yes” to officer) What is your position or equivalent title?

- a) President
- b) EVP
- c) Treasurer
- d) Secretary
- e) Committee Head
- f) Committee Officer
- g) Other _____

How long have you been a member of this organization, in years?

_____ (any whole number value)

(if “yes” to officer) How long have you been a officer/position holder of this organization, in years?

_____ (any whole number value)

Including yourself, how many officers are in this organization (including yourself, if applicable)?

_____ (any whole number value)

Approximately how many hours a week do you spend with this organization?

- a) Under 5
- b) 6-10
- c) 11-15
- d) 16-20
- e) 21+

(if “no” to officer) Approximately what percentage of these hours spent on organization activities are at home or on your own time, as opposed to meetings or events? (% slider bar)

(if “yes” to officer) Approximately what percent of these hours do you spend on officer related responsibilities as opposed to general club activities? (% slider bar)

(if “yes” to officer) Approximately what percent of these hours spent on officer related responsibilities are at home or on your own time, as opposed to at officer/planning meetings? (% slider bar)

Compared to others, how much time do you spend with this organization?

(5 point scale from Significantly less (1) to significantly more (5))

- Officers in your organization |
- Members in your organization |
- Officers in OTHER organizations |
- Members in OTHER organizations|

How successful do you believe this organization is at the following?

(5 point scale from Significantly less (1) to significantly more (5))

- Planning activities |
- Executing activities |
- Meeting Members Needs |
- Exceeding Member’s Expectations |
- Meeting the Community’s Needs |
- Exceeding the Community’s Expectations |

How are events and activities planned for this organization?

_____ (free response)

(if “no” to officer) As a member, how influential can you be on what types of activities and events are planned for this organization?

- a) very uninfluential
- b) somewhat uninfluential
- c) Neither influential or uninfluential
- d) somewhat influential
- e) very influential

What are some key organizational elements that allow this organization to be successful?

_____ (free response)

What are some key areas you wish could be improved about this organization?

_____ (free response)

Why did you choose to be a member in this organization? Select all that apply

- a) Resume builder
- b) Valuable Experience
- c) Fun
- d) Shared Interest
- e) Other _____

How successful has the organization been at meeting your expectations of being a member?

- a) Very Successful
- b) Somewhat Successful
- c) Neither successful or unsuccessful
- d) Somewhat Unsuccessful
- e) Very Unsuccessful

What is the best benefit you have received from being involved with this organization?

_____ (free response 1 line)

(if “no” to officer) Would you ever consider being a leader in this organization?

- a) yes
- b) no

(if “no” to officer) Why or why not?

_____ (free response 1 line)

(if “yes” to officer) Why did you choose to be a leader in this organization? Select all that apply

- a) Resume builder
- b) Valuable Experience
- c) Fun
- d) Shared Interest
- e) Other _____

(if “yes” to officer) How successful has the organization been at meeting your expectations of being a leader?

- a) Very Successful
- b) Somewhat Successful
- c) Neither successful or unsuccessful
- d) Somewhat Unsuccessful
- e) Very Unsuccessful

Do you believe this organization is better than others of its type?

- a) Much worse
- b) Somewhat Worse
- c) Neutral
- d) Somewhat better
- e) Much better

Why do you believe this organization is or is not better than others of its type?

_____ (free response)

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- a) Some high school
- b) High school diploma or equivalent
- c) Some college
- e) Associates degree
- f) Bachelor’s degree
- g) Ph.D.
- h) Graduate or professional degree
- i) I prefer not to answer

Which of the following best describes you

- a) full time student
- b) part time student
- c) not a student
- d) I prefer not to answer

(if full time or part time student) What university do you attend?

- a) _____
- b) I prefer not to answer

What is your class standing?

- a) Freshman
- b) Sophomore
- c) Junior
- d) Senior
- e) Graduate student
- f) Other
- g) I am not a student

What type of degree are you pursuing?

- a) Business
- b) Engineering
- c) Science
- d) Education
- e) Architecture
- f) Health professions
- g) Fine arts
- h) Liberal arts
- i) I am not a student
- i) other _____

Which of the following best describes you

- a) full time employee
- b) part time employee
- c) currently not working
- d) I prefer not to answer

What is your marital status?

- a) Single, never married
- b) Married, without children
- c) Married, with children
- d) Living with a partner
- d) Separated
- e) Other
- f) I prefer not to answer

What is your gender?

- a) female
- b) male
- c) I prefer not to answer